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NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU

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The Editor will gratefully receive contributions, in English or Tamil, of articles on matters of *National War Front interest*, and publish them, if suitable, as signed articles, in the Bulletin. The articles should be short and reach the Editor a week in advance.

LECTURE CXC.

THE LATEST JAP MOVE.

NO NEED FOR CONCERN.

General Auchinleck's re-assuring Statement to the Council of State.

As the House is being adjourned for some days, I thought Hon. members might be interested to hear from me about the general situation which has developed in the central sector of the Burma Front, some details of which are announced in to-day's communiqué from the South-East Asia Command.

I therefore wish, Sir, with your permission, to make a brief statement about the situation on the frontier where Manipur State borders Burma.

Hon. Members will recall that in a broadcast to India on December 13 last, I said that the Japanese realised very well the importance of India to the Allied cause, and that they were likely to do all they could to interfere with our war effort. At the same time, I warned the country that as the Allied pressure on them increased, the Japanese would probably become more reckless in their attempts to throw us off our balance, by raids and attacks designed to alarm and confuse us.

I repeated this warning in the statement I recently laid on the table of this House in answer to a question by the Hon. Raja Yuveraj Dutta Singh on the general war situation and the achievements of Indian troops.

OVER CONFIDENT OFFENSIVE.

The bold, well-executed, but over-confident counter-offensive made by the enemy against the flank and rear of our 7th Division in the Arakan last month, was the first example of this expected reaction on his part. We have for some time been expecting a similar reaction further to the north. This has now developed in the jungle-covered mountain tracts where the State of Manipur borders Burma.

Foiled at considerable cost to themselves in their bold effort to relieve our pressure on them on the Arakan Front, the Japanese are trying the same tactics in the Manipur area. The enemy is taking the offensive in that very rugged and difficult country, where no continuous line of defence is possible.

During the last two years we have been laboriously building roads through this wild region, to enable us to maintain enough troops to deal with the enemy forces which have been concentrating on the Chindwin River.

The Japanese have now sent out raiding columns of considerable strength, in an attempt to carry out their usual policy of forcing our forward troops to withdraw by cutting their supply lines.

We have always realised that there was nothing to stop the enemy from sending columns into these sparsely inhabited mountain tracts if he wanted to do so. It has always been open to the Japanese thus to cross our frontier, and so to carry out a token invasion of India.

Compared with us, however, the enemy has a very different problem to face in this sort of venture. The Wingate Expedition of last year into the heart of Burma was made possible largely by our superiority in the air, which made it independent of supply by land.

ALLIED AIR MASTERY.

Allied air superiority, as Hon. members are well aware, has not only been maintained but is to-day far greater than it was a year ago. In consequence, troops of the 14th Army are again at this very moment operating far in the interior of Burma. Such air support for independent columns is the enemy cannot give owing to his relative weakness in air forces.

It seems, therefore, that if he wishes to use these tactics to create diversions, he must rely on relatively short range operations, relying on the well-known capacity of Japanese troops to exist on very small rations, plus what they can loot from sparsely distributed local inhabitants.

As War Member and C.-in-C. India, I am naturally in the closest daily touch with the Supreme Allied Commander regarding the situation on our frontier. I can assure the House that I am satisfied that the quality of our men, and the strength we have at our disposal, should enable us to deal in due course with this latest Japanese counter-stroke.

There is no need, therefore, to be unduly concerned about the fact that enemy columns are advancing across a line on the map which represents the frontier of India in this wild and thinly populated region.

CONFIDENCE IN TROOPS.

No real threat can materialise, unless and until the Japanese manage to penetrate to points from where they could attack our rail and river communications or our airfields in Assam.

To do this, they must cross great distances of high mountain and dense forest. Lacking means of protection and supply from the air, the enemy cannot hope to maintain such penetration without either destroying or forcing back our troops.

These troops are well acquainted with this most intricate country, and trained to fight in it, and I know that their fighting spirit is at its highest.

I am in no doubt myself as to the ultimate result of the fighting now beginning in this part of the front, though it may take time before the situation is finally cleared up to the satisfaction of our commanders.

WEEKLY WAR SUMMARY.

(A)—LEADING EVENTS.

14—3—44 (Tuesday).	Allies make another landing at *ELEONORA* Bay on the north coast of N. Britain.
	Russians trap another big German Army Group in the lower *DNIEPER* area.
15—3—44 (Wednesday).	Russians occupy *VOROOVITSA* and *TROSTINETS*.
	B. B. C. warns *FINLAND* that "to reject peace terms is to court disaster",
	1,000 R. A. F. bombers raid *STUTTGART*.
16—3—44 (Thursday).	Roosevelt urges Finland to get out of the War.
	Russians cut vital *ODESSA-LWOW* railway.
17—3—44 (Friday).	Russians enter *BESSARABIA* after crossing the *DNIESTER*.
	American bombers raid *VIENNA* in daylight.
	Allies establish a base in the rear of the Japs, in *BURMA*.
18—3—44 (Saturday).	Russians capture *YAMPOL* and *RYBNISTA* on the east bank of the *DNIESTER*.
	American Flying Fortresses raid *AUGSBURG* heavily in daylight.
	1,000 R. A. F. planes raid *FRANKFURT* (Germany).
19—3—44 (Sunday).	Russians capture the Moldavian town of *SAROCA*.
	Allies break through Jap positions in *CHIN* Hills in *BURMA*.
	British Railways become part of the Secret Service as a preliminary 2nd Front preparation.

(B) NEWS IN BRIEF.

Russia.—A gap of 60 miles has been made in the enemy's defences on the River Bug, VOROOVITS and TROSTINETS—across the river—both of them district centres of the ODESSA region have been captured. ODESSA itself is threatened.

Surging forward across the gap, Russian troops have also cut the ODESSA—LWOW railway at a new point, by capturing WAPNYARKA and ZHMERINKA. It may be remembered that at an earlier date the same railway was cut between PROSKUROV and TARNOPOL.

In a ten-day battle the Germans have lost 36,000 dead and 13,000 prisoners, totalling 50,650 men on the Bug Front. The German 6th Army has been annihilated.

The Dniester has been forced along a stretch of 30 miles, and the Red Army has entered MOLDAVIA. Here the town of SOROCA has been taken.

VINNITSA, PROSKUROV and NIKALAYEV, have been surrounded. The following are some of the places captured during the week :—

In the Nikolayev direction : SHIROKAYA-BALKA, NORAYA-ODESSA,

In the Kirovograd direction : PODVYSKOE, NOVO-ARKHANGELAK, BOBRINETS, ROVNOYE.

In the Vinnitsa region : TULCHIN, NEMIROV, TYUSHKI, GENVAN, TORASHPOL, KRYZHOPOL, CHECHILNIK, PESCHANKA.

Inside Poland.—DUBNO.

S. W. of Uman.—BRATSLAV.

East of the Dniester.—YAMPOL, RYBNISTA.

Italy.—The Allies have occupied most part of CASSINO town and the CASSINO railway station.

Air war.—The principal raids were over FRANKFURT, BRUNSWICK, STUTTGART AUGSBURG, VIENNA and SOFIA. VIENNA was raided for the first time by the Mediterranean-based air forces. The attacks were non-stop. 1,500 to 2,000 planes took part at times, and at STUTTGART 3,000 tons of bombs were dropped.

The Pacific.—The Allies have landed at LANGDLINGA in Eleonora Bay on the N-coast of NEW BRITAIN. They have also landed on the island of MANUS in the ADMIRALTY Group, and taken the LORANGAU airfield there.

A Japanese offensive against the Allied beach-head at BOUGAINVILLE (SOLOMONS) has been smashed. TRUK was raided on Wednesday.

China.—The Chinese have recaptured the HELINGKWAN (Black Dragon) Pass, the strategic gate way of the province of S-W. SHANSI.

Burma.—On the N. BURMA Front the Chinese have taken TINGKAWK SAKAN.

RAZABIL, an important enemy base on the MAUNGDAW—BUTHIDAUNG road has been taken. Below RAZABIL, British and West African troops have landed on the enemy's flank, and now hold six village fortresses including KANVIDAN and DODAN.

An Allied base has been established in the heart of N. BURMA, behind the Japanese 18th division, by landing glider-borne troops.

On Friday last Allied troops broke into a Japanese position to the north of TIDDIM in the Chin Hills area.

In a counter-offensive Japanese columns have crossed the Assam frontier into Manipur State, at a point or two.

ALLIED AIR RAIDS.

12—3—44. (Sunday).

EUROPE (German occupied).

DAY :—

Military targets in the PAS DE CALAIS area.

NIGHT :—

Laying mines in enemy waters.

ITALY.

Enemy gun positions and stores in the beach-head area.

RUSSIA.

(28 enemy planes shot down).

Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.

WAKE Island.

NAURU (near Gilbert Islands).

Harbours in N. Britain and N. Guinea.

BURMA.

The rail road station at SHWEBO.

Objectives in the KALADAN and ARAKAN.

Enemy positions, troop concentrations and supply dumps in the CHIN Hills, CHINDWIN and N. W. BURMA.

Jap stores N. W. of MANYWET.

13—3—44 (Monday).
EUROPE (German occupied).
DAY:—
Targets in North FRANCE.
(2 Allied planes missing).
NIGHT:—
(2 enemy planes shot down; 3 Allied planes missing).
Ry. targets at LE MANS.
FRANKFURT and other objectives in Western GERMANY.
Laying mines in enemy waters.
ITALY.
Enemy positions and supply dumps in the ANZIO beach-head area.
Railway yards in ROME.
RUSSIA.
(20 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.
FAR EAST.
A harbour in and shipping off New BRITAIN and New GUINEA.
BURMA.
Enemy positions, troop concentrations and communications in the CHIN Hills, CHINDWIN and N. W. BURMA.
A Jap H. Q. north-east of HOMALIN.
Communications in South BURMA.

14—3—44 (Tuesday).
EUROPE (German occupied).
NIGHT:—
Industrial objectives in DUSSELDORF (Germany).
ITALY.
(4 enemy planes shot down;
1 Allied plane missing).
Railway yards in ROME,
PIOMBINO and MARINADI PISA.
Gun positions and troop concentrations in the battle area.
RUSSIA.
(35 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.
FAR EAST.
7 Jap bases in the CAROLINES and MARSHALLS.
Airfields at RABAUL.
Enemy bases at WEWAK (N. Guinea).
BURMA.
Supply dumps in the RANGOON area and at PROME.
Fighter sweeps over MOULMEIN and SIAM.
Targets in the ARAKAN, KALADAN, MAYU, CHIN Hills, CHINDWIN and N.W. BURMA.

15—3—44. (Wednesday).
EUROPE (German occupied).
DAY:—
Aircraft factory at BRUNSWICK in Germany
(36 Nazi planes shot down; 8 Allied planes missing).
Military objectives in North FRANCE.
Airfields in BELGIUM.
A coastal vessel off the DUTCH Islands.
NIGHT:—(40 Allied planes missing).
Industrial targets at STUTTGART.
MUNICH and other objectives in N.W. GERMANY.
Railway targets at AMIENS (France).
ITALY.
Enemy positions in the CASSINO area and ANZIO Beach-head area.
RUSSIA.
(42 enemy planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.
Enemy bases at KAVIENG (N. Ireland)
NAMATANAI, CAPE ST. GEORGE, and RABAUL (N. Britain).
The airfield at TOBERA (N. Britain) and AITAPE (N. Guinea).
Enemy positions at WEWAK (N. Guinea)
(10 Jap planes shot down).
Enemy base at MUSCHU Island (4 enemy planes shot down).
Airfields, fuel dumps and other targets at TRUK.
BURMA.
The oil refinery at CHAUK.
An oil tank at LANYWA.
KAWLIN and PINLEBU.
Targets in KALADAN, MAYU and CHINDWIN areas.

16—3—44. (Thursday).
EUROPE (German occupied).
DAY:—(125 enemy planes shot down).
Targets in S. W. GERMANY (76 enemy planes shot down; 35 Allied planes missing).
Objectives in N. FRANCE
(4 Allied planes missing).
Night :—
Michelin Rubber Tyre factory at CLERMONT-FERRAND (France).
Railway targets at AMIENS (France).
Objectives in Western GERMANY.
Laying mines in enemy waters.
SOFIA (Capital of BULGARIA).
ITALY.
(3 enemy planes destroyed;
4 Allied planes missing).
Gun positions in the PONTICORVO-PIEDMONTE area.
Guns at ESPRIA.
The docks at LEGHORN.
Shipping on the West ITALIAN coast.
RUSSIA.
(10 German planes shot down).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.
FAR EAST.
Enemy positions on the MANUS Island (Admiralty Group).
The harbour and barges at RABAUL (N. Britain).
Barges at WEWAK and MUSCHU Island.
BURMA.
The airfields at YWATUNG.
The Saweli bridge in North BURMA.
Oil installations at LANYWA.
Enemy positions near KALEWA.
Enemy positions and communications in the ARAKAN, KALADAN and MAYU areas.
Oil carrying rivercraft in South BURMA.

17—3—44 (Friday).
EUROPE (German occupied).
DAY:—
Enemy industrial centres at VIENNA (Capital of AUSTRIA).
The railway yards at SOFIA (Capital of BULGARIA).
The airfields in North FRANCE and HOLLAND
(3 enemy planes destroyed).
NIGHT:—
Objectives in Western GERMANY.
ITALY.
The rail-road bridge at CECCINA.
Rail yards at MONTE PESCALI.
Gun positions and supply dumps in the FROSINONE-FERENTINO area.
Enemy positions in the ANZIO Beach-head area.

RUSSIA.
(37 enemy planes destroyed).
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.
The enemy Naval base at SOURABAYA (Java).
Airfields and supply areas at RABAUL (N. Britain).
Bivouac, supply areas and gun positions at WEWAK (New Guinea).
Jap bases in the KURILE Islands.

BURMA.
Enemy airfields in South BURMA.
ONBAUK and **SHWEBO.**
The airfield at HEHO.
Targets in ARAKAN, MAYU and KALADAN areas.
Dumps at KONGY.

18—3—44 (Saturday).

EUROPE (German occupied).
DAY :— (82 Nazi planes shot down).
Military targets at OBERPFOFFEN HOFFEN.
LECHFELD, LANDSBERG, FRIEDRICHSHAFEN and **AUGSBURG.**
An aircraft factory in HOLLAND.
Airfields and other targets in N. FRANCE.
Night :—
The industrial centre of FRANKFURT (22 Allied planes missing).
A big explosive factory at BERGERAC.
The railway junction at PLODIV (Bulgaria).

ITALY.
(65 enemy planes shot down).
Airfields at UDINE, VILLA ORBA, LAVARIANO, GORIZA and MANIAGO.
Rail yards at ORVIETO, and FOLIGNO.
The docks at PIOMBINO and LEGHORN.
Motor transport in the battle area.
Shipping off the DALMATIAN coast.

RUSSIA.
Air combats and grounded aircraft all along the RUSSIAN Front.

FAR EAST.
An enemy convoy off HOLLANDIA (N. Guinea).
Airfields and supply areas at WEWAK.
Enemy positions at BOUGAINVILLE.
Jap Naval units off the JABA River.
Jap held atolls in the MARSHALLS Group.

BURMA.
Dumps at KONGY.
Communications and enemy positions in the ARAKAN and KALADAN areas.
Supply dumps in S. BURMA.
Targets in MYITKYINA, KAMAING and MOGAUNG.
Factories in Central BURMA.

ENEMY AIR RAIDS.

13—3—44 (Monday).

BRITAIN.
South and South-East coast of ENGLAND.

RUSSIA.
No information.

FAR EAST.
Allied forward positions in North BURMA (4 Jap planes shot down).

14—3—44 (Tuesday).

BRITAIN.
LONDON area (13 enemy planes shot down).

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.
No information.

15—3—44 (Wednesday).

BRITAIN.
LONDON area.

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.
No information.

16—3—44 (Thursday).

BRITAIN.
A town in East ANGLIA.

RUSSIA.
No information.

FAR EAST.
Allied forward positions in BURMA.

17—3—44. (Friday).

BRITAIN.
LONDON area (only an alert).

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.
No enemy air activity.

18—3—44. (Saturday).

BRITAIN.
Parts of E. ANGLIA and E. MIDLANDS (4 Nazi planes shot down).

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.
No enemy air activity.

19—3—44 (Sunday).

BRITAIN.
No enemy air activity.

RUSSIA and FAR EAST.
No information.

SIDE LIGHTS.

RUSSIAN VICTORIES. Though the season is not favourable for military operations the Allied successes in RUSSIA are by no means negligible. Not for nothing is Gen. Zhukov known as *Liubinets*—the favourite, the darling. In 1941, he threw the Germans back from MOSCOW; in 1942, he sprang the trap at STALINGRAD; and in 1943, he raised the seige of LENINGRAD. Now switching the attack from North to South, as the Russians know how, he has led his victorious armies from SHEPOTOVKA and cut the LWOW—ODESSA line. Another army led by another intrepid Commander has closed round NIKOLAYEV and captured BERISLAV. In a new offensive, the Dniester has been crossed, and a hundred and forty towns and villages have been

liberated on both sides of the river. In a ten-day battle on the Lower Bug 50,653 Germans have been either killed or wounded. Russian armies have penetrated into BESSARABIA, and captured SOROCA in MOLDAVIA. BESSARABIA belonged to RUSSIA till 1941 and was afterwards been incorporated in RUMANIA.

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THE GERMAN SATELLITES are far from happy: they rue the day they entered into partnership with the Axis. Their Quisling Governments are shaky, because they have ceased to be popular; but they do not know how to get rid of their German tyrants, because the Nazi grip is strong.

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FINLAND. One of these Satellites is FINLAND. In this hour of general ruin, FINLAND, blind to its own interest, is resisting offers of peace, although, strangely enough, the overtures for peace come from a too generous conqueror. Out of regard for FINLAND's feelings, RUSSIA has modified and moderated her original terms, has asked for HANGOE instead of PETSAMO, and allowed the German armies in FINLAND to be isolated, instead of being interned. BRITAIN has advised FINLAND strongly to accept the terms, and AMERICA has threatened to break off relations. King GUSTAV of SWEDEN has added his exhortations. But FINLAND has refused. RUSSIA has started an offensive on the Finnish Front. Yet all hope is not lost, because RUSSIA is reasonable, the Allies are in a conciliatory mood, and the Finnish Government, though outwardly obstinate, is not unwilling to negotiate.

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EIRE. Another intractable European State is EIRE, who in the present hour of universal insecurity, talks of neutrality and independence—terms which have no meaning so long as the Axis menace continues.

The de Valera Government have refused to close the enemy legations in DUBLIN, through which it is known important military information is being conveyed. As a first step, travelling to IRELAND has been restricted, and measures for the further isolation of Southern Ireland have been foreshadowed. Mr. Churchill has told the House of Commons:—

"I need scarcely say how painful it is to us to take such measures, in view of the large number of Irishmen who are fighting so bravely in our Armed Forces, and the many deeds of personal heroism by which they have kept alive the martial hononr of the Irish race.

"No one, I think, can reproach us for precipitancy. No other nation in the world would have been so patient. In view, however, of the fact that both British and British-Dominion lives, and the lives of the soldiers of our Allies are imperilled, we are bound to do our outmost to obtain effective security for the forthcoming operations.

"If a catastrophe were to occur to the Allied armies, which could be traced to the retention of the German and Japanese representatives in Dublin, a gulf would be opened between Great BRITAIN on the one hand and Southern IRELAND on the other, which even generations would not bridge.

"The British Government would also be held accountable to the people of the U. S. if it could be shown that we had in any way failed to do everything in our power to safeguard their troops."

RUMANIA. The case of RUMANIA is different. RUMANIA wants peace but not on Russian terms. RUSSIA, in fact has refused even to negotiate with RUMANIA. RUMANIA thinks that 'the Russian bear wants too big a bite'. Still secret emissaries from RUMANIA have met Russian and Turkish officials in ANKARA and discussed the peace terms, prepared to go the length of even displacing Marshal Antonescu, the present Dictator. It would appear that the step has been taken with the knowledge and even support of the Marshal himself, as with the penetration of RUSSIA into Rumanian-held territory the conviction is growing, of the futility of continuing the Axis connection. In this, both the opposition and the Government parties of RUMANIA are united. While the Antonescu Government continues to support and pay lip-service outwardly to the Germans, it allows the opposition to carry on anti-war activities practically openly.

Prince Stirbey, the Rumanian peace envoy is reported to be on his way to the MIDDLE EAST and CAIRO, to continue his conversations with the Allies. His mission may be a last minute attempt to save RUMANIA and the throne of King Michael. But though he was once a power no doubt, he is now a spent force. It is also possible that he is an Axis emissary, trying to discover what the Allies are prepared to concede if an armistice should be asked for. So until more is known of his credentials it is not likely that much will come out of the mission.

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HUNGARY. Meanwhile the fate that has overtaken HUNGARY supplies a moral and a lesson to the Axis dupes in general. Urged by greed, HUNGARY signed the Anti-Comintern Pact in 1939 and the Three-Power Pact in 1940, and invaded RUSSIA also on the side of the Axis. In reward, Hitler gave her large slices of Balkan territory carved out of YUGOSLAVIA and RUMANIA. Now the hour of retribution has struck. HUNGARY is strategically situated betwen CZECHOSLOVAKIA on the north, RUMANIA on the east, YUGOSLAVIA on the south, and GERMANY itself, on the west. With the Russian armies driving towards the Rumanian frontier, Hitler has occupied the whole of HUNGARY, made its Regent prisoner, and appointed his own ministers. Leaving a force behind to guard HUNGARY, Hitler's forces have hurried forward to defend the Carpathian passes on the Russo-Rumanian frontier.

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IN ITALY, after Kesselring's third defeat at ANZIO, CASSINO, the German key stronghold on the main front has been reduced to rubble. The battle for its possession is bitter.

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IN NORTHERN ITALY the forces of resistance are gaining ground. The strike of Italian workers in MILAN has spread, and the whole area from the borders of TUSCANY to the frontiers of FRANCE, GERMANY and SWITZERLAND—some 130,000 square Kilometres in area, is affected by the unrest.

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IN YUGOSLAVIA · partisan forces continue to attack and disrupt the German communications.

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THE WAR AT SEA is going well. Last week, we reported that the Allied loss of merchantmen was barely 1 per cent. More statistics have now been published. The enemy's loss during last year was 200 U-boats and 10,000 crews, and during this period BRITAIN safely escorted 88 per cent of cargoes to MURMANSK along the Arctic route.

TAE HAT TRICK. This week comes the news of the most devastating blow ever delivered at sea. Sloops of the Royal Navy, in an engagement lasting 20 days in the N. Atlantic, destroyed 6 German U-boats and, what looks like a hat-trick, three of them were sunk in a matter of 16 hours. Not a single ship in the convoys was lost.

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AIR-WAR: NON-STOP. The wheel has now come full circle since Goering once boasted that the Reich would never be bombarded. The air offensive intensified from March 4, is becoming more and more gruelling in its power of devastation. This week the attacks were concentrated on BRUNSWICK, STUTTGART, SOFIA, VIENNA, AUGSBURG and FRANKFURT. The strength of the attack has been of the order of 1,000 bombers, 3,000 bombs, 10,000 high explosive bombs and 350,000 incendiary bombs—an impressive crescendo. On BERLIN alone a hundred and nine raids have been carried out, with a total of 25,000 tons of bombs dropped. During 40 days (January 21 to March 2), 46,000 tons have been dropped, giving an average of 150 tons a day.

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AND WHERE IS THE *LUFTWAFFE* NOW? GERMANY, of course, continues to tell the world that her air force is now stronger than ever before. But where is it now? and what is it doing? Certainly it is not in RUSSIA, where, in the midst of heavy fighting over immense fronts, the Russians safely transfer 600 of their own machines for a raid on HELSINKI, the Finnish Capital. The *Luftwaffe* is not at ANZIO either, where, if it had been present, it could have smashed up the beach-head by this time. It is not over BRITAIN, save a few rag-tag and bob-tail machines sneaking into LONDON. It is certainly not over German cities in strength, judged by the way they are exposing the cities to Allied attacks.

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THE INVASION. The time of the great invasion is coming. The King has visited the air-borne troops, armoured units, the reconnaissance units and the camouflage equipment. The Government has requisitioned the railways in BRITAIN The coast is being cleared. Arrangements are getting ready for the Zero hour.

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ENEMY PROPAGANDA. As Lord Halifax, the British Ambassador to the UNITED STATES has said, the German people see defeat staring them in the face, and are secretly hoping for a negotiated peace or a division in the Allied ranks. Meanwhile, lacking better news, German leaders are playing up their rocket guns, automatic cannon and their other anti-invasion devices. Himmler praises his *Waffen S. S.* as the pillar of GERMANY's internal stability. Goebbels gives exaggerated accounts of the achievements of the *Luftwaffe* over BRITAIN, and assures his hearers that its 'great hour is yet to strike'. Deitmar goes about publishing that the men who are going to defend the Western Front when it will be opened, are the veterans from the African Desert and the Eastern Front—we suppose, highly experienced in the art of successful withdrawals, retreats and surrenders. Field Marshal Rundstedt confides in journalists that there is no Maginot line spirit in the German Army. Dr. Ley paints the glowing picture of a post-war EUROPE, provided there is a German victory. The

wooing of EUROPE is proceeding simultaneously. Croatian Quislings were recently invited to the Fuehrer's headquarters, to be assured that the Reich was fighting in order to give independence to the small nations. The Quisling Government of CZECHOSLOVAKIA has been told that the Reich is now fighting to save Czechoslovakian culture from Russian barbarism. But the Czechs have not forgotten either Lidice or Lezaky or their five years of slavery. They are waiting for their deliverance, and are glad that the Russians are only a hundred miles from their frontier.

Dr. Benes, convinced that the time has come to strike from within has called upon the Czechs to resist actively—not only passively, as heretofore.

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THE BATTLE OF THE PACIFIC is no longer confined to island-hopping, but has become the capture of vital positions on the road to TOKYO. MANUS Island in the ADMIRALTY group has been occupied, and new landings have been made at LANGDLINGA in NEW BRITAIN, and on AMIRAU and ELOMUSAO islands in the Bismarck Archipelago. All Japanese attempts to renew an offensive at BOUGAINVILLE have been foiled, and some 100,000 Japanese troops have been trapped in the BISMARCK—SOLOMONS area. Admiral Nimitz is confident that the enemy's vital lines have been so attenuated by the sinkings that he will soon be forced to abandon TRUK and RABAUL. But Japanese propagandists are telling their people a different story. They say that RABAUL is still what it was, and that the airmen and ground forces there are enjoying baseball and ping-pong, and raising vegetables in gardens. This calculated bluff is evidently meant to keep up home morale, while, as a matter of fact, even as the lie was being uttered, U. S. heavy bombers were actually giving RABAUL one of their heaviest poundings.

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IN BURMA, big events are taking shape. In reply to the Japanese threat 'to march on DELHI', the Allies have penetrated deep into Northern BURMA. The thrust is at three points :-(1) on the Ledo front in the HUKAWNG Valley, where Stilwell's Americans and American-trained Chinese are pushing their way across the CHINDWIN and have taken MAINKWAN and WALAWBUN ; (2) on the TAMU-TIDDIM front where British and Indian troops are fighting the Japanese inside BURMA and (3) the ARAKAN front, where British, West African and Indian troops, British tanks and Spitfires have taken RAZABIL and made landings below RAZABIL in 6 villages. An Allied base has been established in the heart of North BURMA, in the rear of the Japanese 18th Division, by glider air-borne troops. There is also a converging movement on the Japanese rail-head and base of MYITKYINA ; were it to fall, the Japanese communications with MANDALAY, their base of supplies, would be cut.

As we go to print the news has come of a Japanese counter-offensive directed between TIDDIM and IMPHAL in the central front. Here Japaneses columns are reported to have crossed the ASSAM frontier into MANIPUR State at a point or two. This latest development, we have no doubt will be dealt with, as earlier Japanese attempts at infiltration on the Burmese frontier have been ; but the fact that for the first time now, the enemy has crossed into INDIA will, let us also hope, rouse the foolish and the mischievous still found in this country to a sense of duty. The war has come to INDIA.

THE INDIAN LABOUR FORCE. These operations cannot be otherwise than slow. The mountains and jungles to the east of ASSAM are both an asset and a hindrance. They saved INDIA from Japanese invasion two years ago, and now they stand in the way of the Allied advance. The fighting front is 300 miles behind the nearest railway in India, and is reached only by roads, which, thanks to the bull dozers and the Indian Labour Force, are being steadily extended into enemy-held country. Here is an account of their work from a recent visitor to the front—Sir Francis Low, of the *Times of India* :—

'I heard two good stories about the men of the Labour front. The Indian driver of a bull dozer was cutting a path out of a steep hill-side when his vehicle slipped over the edge. It described a couple of somersaults before righting itself, whereupon the driver, who had struck to his post although badly bruised, steered the bull dozer in a lightning zig-zag descent to the bottom of the valley where it arrived safely.

'The other story concerns the British crew of a bull dozer. A harassed-looking despatch rider came upon one of these modern road-makers thrashing its way through the forest. 'Where are the front line troops?' he asked the driver 'Oh them', replied that individual carelessly, 'about a couple of miles behind, I should think'.

'The BURMA L of C is like the solar system—*E pur si muove*—on it every thing is in motion—endless streams of motor vehicles, and finally, at the extremities, pack mules. And over all, near the front line, is a swirling cloud of dust.

'All over our front line, from the highly trained pilots of modern fighter planes down to the humblest soldier, there is keenness to get at the enemy. Another thing which strikes me is the amazing *camaraderie* and efficiency among the various units of the fighting and auxiliary forces. Gone are the days when the so-called 'martial castes' of INDIA had the sole monopoly of the army; men belonging to the former non-martial classes are now crowding into the technical services. We met Madrasis, Parsis and Bengalis in an Indian Air Force squadron, in transport units, in signal Companies and in other auxiliary units, all working happily together. For example, in an Indian unit, of which the Commanding officer was a Sikh, I had not far to go before I discovered a gentleman called Satarawalla who, true to his name, was a Parsi from Satara.

'In units where the personnel is mixed, Indians are bearing their full share of the work. The British Officer Commanding a signal unit told me how practically all his despatch-riders were Indians. Their task is a hazardous one; rough roads and bad weather result in many accidents. Yet there is no faltering. The officer has related the story of how an Indian despatch rider whose machine became *hors de combat*, walked 100 miles in five days to deliver his message. That incident illustrates the spirit of the Fourteenth Army. And in all mixed units, especially those connected with transport, supplies and maintenance, a new crop of Indian Officers from Technical Schools and Colleges is coming in. The Indian Army of the future is growing before our eyes.'

CHANGING STRATEGY OF SECOND FRONT.

EFFECT OF AMERICAN LONG-RANGE FIGHTERS.

(from The Daily Express).

The success of American long-range fighters in the daylight attacks on Berlin has disclosed a big change in the strategy of air war, one that must add to the troubles of the enemy in meeting the second front.

Most bomber escorts were single-engined fighters with only one man aboard, and yet they were able to operate 600 miles from their bases with the speed and fire power of the short-range Spitfire. Although many hundreds of these Thunderbolts and Mustangs operated near and over Berlin, the total fighter losses–including twin-engined Lightnings were only 11. They shot down 93 German machines. The bombers destroyed 83 more—total 176.

This achievement shows that the invasion areas need not be confined to the limits of short-range fighters. Long-range single-seat fighters can give battle to any planes at great distances from their bases.

The planners of the second front will not now necessarily have the scheme of main landings within an area of about 100 miles of our forward bases in Britain. This 100 miles is the maximum cover short-range fighters can give. Allied chiefs can now be assured of the initial adequate air cover from single-seat fighters all along the enemy-held coast from, say, Scandinavia to the Spanish frontier.

The Americans are responsible for this development. They concentrated on the production of long-range fighters having the fire power of the Spitfire for daylight escort work with their bombers. They trained their men specially, always believing that they could produce long-range fighters for the job. The Mustang was originally a British designed plane ; Britain first used auxiliary fuel tanks which allow Mustangs and Thunderbolts to escort bombers to targets 600 miles away. The tanks are dropped when empty, or when the plane is engaged by enemy fighters, to attain the performance of the best interceptors the *Luftwaffe* can send against them.

ATTACK ON BERLIN—HIGHEST POINT IN BOMBER OFFENSIVE.

(*By Squadron-Leader John Strachey*)

The attack upon Berlin marks the highest point yet reached in the bomber offensive. As such, it will have a profound effect upon the coming invasion of Europe. It is not too much to say that if we can press the bomber offensive to the limit this winter, the lives of hundreds of thousands of our men may be saved when the last great battle comes. Don't misunderstand me. I'm not saying that the bombing of Germany is a sort of artillery preparation for the invasion. It isn't. And it won't necessarily cease when the land attack in the west begins. If the Germans are hopefully looking forward to that, they may be very seriously deceiving themselves.

Our land attack must be prepared in any case to break through the hard crust of the German defence. But what will lie beneath that hard crust? Shall we find that the German nation as a whole is still tough and resolute, a nation which has to be conquered province by province, and even mile by mile? Or shall we find that the crust of German military power covers a nation which has already been deeply wounded, both materially and morally? The answer will be given in the main by the degree of success achieved by the Anglo-American bomber offensive.

The attack which has now been opened upon Berlin is a deliberate attempt to deprive the enemy of the use of his capital city. The R. A. F. Bomber Command has set out to make it impossible for the Nazis to use Berlin. For remember, Berlin is to-day the

capital, not simply of Germany, but of Hitler's whole slave empire. Berlin is a city in a totally different class to Essen, Dusseldorf, or even Hamburg—or any other of the cities which the Bomber Command has so far attacked. Berlin is the fourth largest city in the world. It is one of the half-dozen or so world capitals round which the life not only of one nation but of a whole area of the world revolves. Berlin contains factories of the highest importance; but its unique significance is that the economic life of Central Europe as a whole has been carried on by means of the financial, marketing, administrative and transportation facilities of Berlin.

We don't know what the effect of the paralysis of such a centre will be. For such a thing has never yet happened. If, however, the Bomber Command can effect its purpose, we shall know..........and within the next few months. It may be that the Nazi empire can be carried on without Berlin, I daresay it can be. But the ruin of Berlin—if it can be effected—will take us a long step towards the weakening of Germany to a point where she will not be able to resist the final attack. "If it can be effected"—for don't let us deceive ourselves for a moment into supposing that Berlin has already been destroyed.

Certain cities—Kassel, for instance—can sometimes be crippled by the tonnage which the Bomber Command can now drop in a single attack. Incidentally, I hear that after one of those decisive attacks a grim little anecdote is on everybody's lips in Germany. People in the Reich are saying to each other: "Last night twenty-three British bombers were shot down and one of our cities is missing!" But Berlin is a different matter. Berlin can't be dealt with in a single attack like that. You can get some idea of the size of the task which the Bomber Command has set itself by comparing Berlin with Hamburg. Hamburg was itself a vast city—getting on for twice the size of any city n Britain outside of London. Hamburg had 1,800,000 inhabitants, and a fully built-up area of 8,382 acres. But Berlin had 4,400,000, and a fully built-up area of 23,000 acres. It will take a whole series of attacks before such a city as this can be rendered useless to the Nazis. Moreover, it will, of course, be imposible for the Bomber Command to peg away at Berlin without interruption. The enemy must be kept guessing as to where we are going to next—as he was by that brilliantly executed operation on December 3. The Bomber Command, you will remember, feinted at Berlin, and then suddenly dived off south to Leipzig. There will, no doubt, be plenty more surprises in store for the enemy.

PRODUCT OF BRITAIN'S GRINDING HARD WORK.

It isn't too much to say that the bomber offensive is to-day the joint product of the brains, the courage, and the grinding hard work of this entire nation. The very success which has been achieved may tend to make some people think that the bomber offensive has just been a matter of building a sufficient number of bombers, flying them over Germany, dropping the bombs, and coming home again. The fact is that the bomber offensive has only been carried forward by keeping one step ahead of the enemy's continually improving defences. It would have been fatal even to pause. The counter-measure—the new method of fighter attack against the new form of bomber defence—has never been long in coming. We have had to be ready with the counter-measure; and we have been.

If, for example, we were to attack Berlin to-day with the same aircraft, and using the same methods, which we employed only two years ago, our bomber force would be massacred in one or two operations. But, equally, if to-day our Lancasters, Halifaxes,

Stirlings had to meet no more than the defences which existed in 1942 they could destroy every industrial centre in Germany with negligible losses to themselves.

Recently, we have been given an account of the work of our Pathfinder Force. The need for someone to find the path to the target is obvious—for naturally that same darkness which hides the bomber from the defending fighter also tends to hide the target from the bomber.

The Pathfinders are marking the target, so that intensely concentrated bombing is being achieved. For Germany that's perhaps the most ominous development of all. For it is the concentration in both time and space that counts—the tons per minute per acre!

UNFORTUNATE FINLAND.

J. C. Johnstone.

Finland occupies a peculiar position in the war. She is the only belligerent who is ranged against the United Nations, though a genuine democracy. She is the only country fighting by the side of Germany without having signed the Axis pact. She distinguishes herself from Germany's other satellites by describing her status as that of a "co-belligerent". All through the war she has been torn between her traditional friendship towards the United States and her traditional antipathy towards Russia. Her friendship with the United States is based on the extreme regard she earned in that country by her fidelity to her war debt obligations.

Hitherto, however, Finland's hostility to Russia has been a more powerful motive of policy than her tie with the United States. She remembers the bitter oppression she suffered in the last quarter century under the Tzars. She remembers the fierce battles fought to free herself from the Bolsheviks and their immediate successors. Above all she cherishes revenge for the war of 1939—40.

REVENGE MOTIVE.

Finland's desire for revenge completely warped her political judgment. To satisfy it, she was prepared to aid and abet Hitler in clamping his monstrous tyranny on the rest of mankind. Heedless of his brutalities towards small countries like Norway, Czechoslovakia, Greece and the rest, she declared war on Russia within a day or two of his attack in June 1941. Hitler, it is true, had taken the precaution of ensuring that he could exert duress. In September 1940 he had obtained from Finland a "transit agreement" for troops, but by June 1941 he had contrived to send four divisions into the country. There can nevertheless be no question that Finland's entry into the war was voluntary and independent of Nazi pressure. Great Britain and the United States, while appreciating her motives, naturally did not accept them as a valid excuse for her criminal folly. Though she herself took the initiative in breaking off relations with Britain at the end of July, it was not till December 6, after every remonstrance had proved futile, that Britain finally declared war on her. From the first, the United States exerted her good offices to wean Finland from her suicidal policy. In August 1941 she vainly tried to pursuade her to accept the Russian offer of her pre-1940 frontier if she would come out of the war. Subsequent efforts at mediation having met with equally little success, the United States last April withdrew her Minister and most of her staff from the Helsinki Legation, though still preserving diplomatic relations.

The most that can be said in extenuation of Finland's policy is that since December 1941, when her troops had reached a certain line satisfactory to her ambitions, they have practically ceased fighting, and have rendered no more assistance to the Germans than the immobilization of a certain number of Russian divisions.

Finland stands at the parting of the ways. If she seizes her chance, repentance, belated though it already is, gives her a claim to indulgent treatment which extends to no other of Germany's satellites.

STALIN'S PLANS FOR PEACE.

INTERVIEW WITH Dr. BENES.

(From the Daily Express.)

Dr. Eduard Benes, President of Czechoslovakia, and the latest Allied statesman to visit Moscow, gave an exclusive account of his mission to the Kremlin, and of his conversations with Soviet leaders and Stalin's plans for peace.

It defines Stalin's attitude to the Balkan States—what he expects of them, and what he regards as their rights—and so may help to end the desperate indecision of Hitler's allies in the south. It reassures Turkey at a crucial turn in her fortunes. For Poland, once more a battlefield, it marks out a future. Above all, it deals clearly with the question mark that Germany has tried to keep suspended over the world at war—whether Stalin will use the common victory to Sovietise his neighbours.

The answer Benes gives emphatically is "No."

I found Dr. Benes in his sun-lit room at the Czechoslovak Embassy in London. A quiet little man, formally dressed, precise of speech and almost deliberately colourless. Dr. Benes knows Russian leaders well. For 20 years Soviet co-operation has been the cardinal point in his policy. Stalin he admires as a man who in achieving world stature has also become jovial, frank and accommodating. Dr. Benes is convinced that after the war Russia, Poland and Czechoslovakia "must and will" form a united barrier against any new German aggression.

He said, "For my part I have established confidence with the Russians. They mean what they say; I believe they will collaborate faithfully with Britain and America. I believe they will fulfil scrupulously the decisions of Teheran so as to safeguard peace for several generations."

What of the Danubian countries? What of Bulgaria, Rumania and Hungary who are in the war with Germany? What of Yugoslavia, where Marshal Tito leads the people's army? It is above all in this zone that the Germans have concentrated their distracting propaganda of Stalin's Sovietisation designs; President Benes does not believe that the Soviet Union is prepared to intervene in the internal affairs of her neighbours.

He assured me that Stalin is willing to be quoted "as most definitely opposed" to any attempt to impose Communist ideas on these countries. Stalin, he says, takes a realist and a patriotic view that it cannot be to Russia's benefit that administrations unstable in character, because they do not rest on the will of the people, should be set up in the Balkans. Nor, according to Dr. Benes's opinion, does Stalin want to dominate this great strategic area.

What he does want is the end of the Fascist-minded oligarchies, such as Borisses in Bulgaria and Horthys in Hungary, which joined Germany in breaking the peace.

On the specific question of Hungary, Stalin said that she would have to disgorge the plunder Hitler gave her. This would include the vital province of Transylvania which Russians pronounce to be Rumanian in character. (This statement is of major importance, since it is the one question on which the two countries would go to war against each other at any moment if Hitler permitted. It will dismay Hungary's pro-Nazi rulers and encourage the peace movement in Rumania).

All through the war Germany has sedulously fostered Turkish fears of Russia, particularly on the score of the alleged Soviet designs on the Dardanelles. Has Russia any claims to put forward against Turkey, I asked. "According to my information," said Dr. Benes, "the Russians are not claiming anything for themselves, and I am convinced that the suspicions of Russian designs in Turkey are unjustified."

An independent Austria was declared to be one of the aspirations of the Moscow conference. It will have Czechoslovakia as a more friendly neighbour, but Dr. Benes has agreed that they must leave any negotiations about their relations until after the war. Benes is completely confident about the march of his own nation. He says, and his pale blue eyes are a little warmer as he says, "When the time comes our people will strike. The call has already gone out. When Germany is defeated I see no reason why everything should not proceed in a normal way in my country. Within six months of my return, there will be new elections, and I anticipate no special trouble in Czechoslovakia when I return."

ALLIED CO-OPERATION IN FINNISH PEACE MOVE
PARALLEL WITH ITALY RECALLED.

By W. N. Ewer.

The preliminaries of the Finnish armistice negotiation have given a good example of the Allied diplomatic co-operation. It was primarily a matter for the Russians to deal with, as the Italian armistice was primarily a matter for the British and the United States Governments. But just as the terms for Italy were approved by the Soviet Government before being handed to the Italians, the terms for Finland were approved by the British Government before Madame Kollontay handed them to M. Paasikivi.

The United States Government does not enter into the picture, since the United States and Finland are not at war. But the State Department has been kept fully informed of the progress of events.

As between Britain and Russia, the approval by each of any armistice negotiation by the other is required by Article 2 of the Anglo-Soviet Treaty, but the consultations have been not a mere formal fulfilment of the treaty obligation, but an expression of the increasingly close and intimate co-operation in the political as in the diplomatic field.

All arrangements are, of course, being made to associate in the final act all those of the United Nations (including the British Dominions) which are–if only formally–at war with Finland. In the parallel case of Italy, it will be recalled, General Eisenhower announced the armistice in the name of the "United Nations".

The moderate character of the terms has caused no surprise in Britain, except among those who had thought that the Russians might decline to deal with the present Finnish Government and army leaders.

But an armistice, to have any reality, must be concluded with an authority in a defeated country which can in fact carry out its conditions. Nor does it in any way imply any kind of approval of the character or personnel of a Government or military authority which signs.

Again the parallel of Italy holds. None of the Allied Governments had or has any predilection for Marshal Badoglio or King Victor Emmanuel. But the King and the Marshal were—as nobody else was—in a position to "deliver the goods".

The future régime in Italy is a matter for the Italian people, so too in Finland. But in either case the Allies are entitled to require that authority for the time being shall be in the hands of men who are prepared loyally to carry out their undertakings.

All Europe is watching Finland, most closely of all the other satellite States—Hungary, Bulgaria and Rumania. All the three would gladly escape if they could from the German alliance, which was once so apparently profitable and now seems so dangerous a liability. So they watch anxiously to see if Finland can successfully carry out a difficult manœuvre.

The crux of the problem for Finns is the presence in Northern Finland of Dietl's seven German divisions. Beyond any doubt, if those divisions had not been there, Finland, would have made peace with the Allies weeks or months ago.

Germany has never trusted her satellites. So she has done everything to commit them or their rulers irrevocably to her cause. She lured the Rumanians and Hungarians by playing on their old rivalry in Transylvania to involve their armies in the Russian campaign. She encouraged the Bulgarians to unpardonable brutalities in Grecian Thrace and Serbian Macedonia. She has placed sufficient troops of her own in each satellite State to suggest that any satellite which thinks of breaking from her thraldom will have to face the consequences of war in its own territory. Nevertheless, they are all visibly wavering, all anxiously watching Finland.

NAZIS AND RELIGION.

(*From the Mediterranean Review*).

The recent outburst from Berlin on the Allied bombing of Monte Cassino Monastery is shown up in its proper perspective by the following Nazi crime sheet, which makes it clear that the pretended Nazi horror at what they call Allied "sacrilege" is nothing more than a Goebbelsian device to discredit the Allies. For, the record of Nazi despoliation, destruction and militarisation of both secular and temporal buildings, of their looting of art treasures, of the maltreatment of priests—is too black to be forgotten. It was the German who, by transforming the Monte Cassino Monastery into a formidable fortress,

forced the Allies to bomb it. If to-day they accuse the Allies of having committed sacrilege, it is only to try and exonerate themselves from crimes which will ever bear testimony to their vandalism. Here are a few Nazi black deeds which can never be whitewashed.

CHURCHES.

In Italy itself, prior to the bombing of Monte Cassino Monastery, Allied troops found churches militarised. In one village, the German headquarters were located in a church, where mines and booby traps were laid before their retreat. In Norway, the famous church at Sorreisa, first used as a munition store, is only one of the many Norwegian churches cleared for fortification purposes. Holland has witnessed five churches destroyed to make way for German fortifications ; one of these being the Catholic church dedicated to the Blessed Martyrs of Gorinchem. In Poland, according to Cardinal Bertram, Archbishop of Breslau, nearly all the churches have been closed ; some of them are now being used by the Germans as stores. One of the churches in the Diocese of Poznan has been transformed into a riding school. In the Pelpein diocese, the Bishop's palace and Chapter house have been turned into a Gestapo centre, the Cathedral itself being turned into a garage. In Russia, the world famous Pechersky Monastery was converted into a German fortress, and in Austria the famous Cistercian abbey of Wilbering near Dinz has been turned into a monument to Hitler. There is ample evidence that all the way from North Cape to the Pyrenees, sacred buildings have been sacrificed to German defence works.

ART TREASURES.

Nor have art treasures escaped at the hands of the Nazis. The famous tenth century Belgian altar piece, "Adoration of the Lamb," originally in Ghent Cathedral, has appeared in a German museum. The famous Gobelin tapestries, and many other treasures of Strasbourg Cathedral (France) were carried off by German troops. Nearly all Prague's (Czechoslovakia) priceless religious treasures, including valuable silver from the Cathedral of Stvitus, have been removed to "places of security". The famous Pelpein (Poland) diocesan library has been dispersed, the more valuable books going to Berlin, the others into the furnace of a local factory.

PRIESTS.

But that is not all. As many as 4,500 priests are known to have been in Dachau concentration camp at one time. According to prisoners who escaped from the camp into Switzerland, about 1,500 priests died in Dachau in one year alone. Poland has probably seen the greatest slaughter of priests, and records show that over 1,600 have been killed in Western Poland alone. In one Polish diocese, only sixty priests now remain out of the original pre-war total of 600.

SACRED BUILDINGS.

The Nazi attitude to sacred buildings is summed up in the words of Herr Frank, the Nazi Governor of Poland who, said : referring to the Wawel Cathedral in Cracow, "This Cathedral is now a temple dedicated to the cult of blood and race". This unwavering Nazi policy, which can be described as being at once anti-Catholic, anti-Christian, anti-religious, uncivilised and pagan has never ceased to trample upon religion in all its varied aspects throughout Europe.

MUTUAL AID PRINCIPLE IN FINANCING WAR.

EXAMPLE OF ALASKA HIGHWAY.

(*from The Times*).

There are few better examples of the value of the mutual aid principle in financing war than the construction and maintenance of the great Alaska highway, and of the parallel chain of air bases which enable the American and Canadian air-power to operate effectively in the far north-west.

Both the highway and the "staging route" for air transport are vital to the United States as well as to Canada in the war against Japan, since Alaska is both open to possible attack and a useful jumping off place for offensives against Japan. Both considerations made it necessary to link together arsenals of the west coast of the United States and the military and naval bases in Alaska. The project was made more attractive and more readily feasible by the existence of a series of air-ports on the Canadian territory, leading from Edmonton in Alberta to Dawson on the frontier between Alaska and the Canadian Yukon. Within a few months of Pearl Harbour, an agreement was reached between the Canadian and American Governments to extend and improve these air-stations, and connect them by a highway which, traversing the territory well out of danger zone, would establish a firm and safe line of communications for American outposts on the far northern coasts of the Pacific. The work was carried through at unprecedented speed. The road was actually open to traffic at the end of 1942, and since then has been constantly improved. As originally agreed, the United States shouldered the cost of constructing the highway and maintaining it during the war, in consideration of the heavy expense incurred by Canada over air-ports comprising the "staging route". Since then, war requirements of American air services have necessitated a great increase in Canadian expenditure on these ports.

It is now announced that the Canadian Government will not expect payment for the permanent facilities and improvements effected to meet the American war requirements: moreover, the Canadian Government will reimburse the American Government for their expenditure on permanent works on the air route.

Mr. Howe, in making this announcement, expressed Canada's hope that the right to use this "staging route" to the far north-west would become part of the general scheme of international co-operation in air transport. The highway and the parallel air route open up wide possibilities. They have been created and developed by co-operation between two great North American nations, and may well serve to facilitate co-operation on a wider basis in serving the permanent purposes of peace.

NEARLY 100,000 JAPANESE TROOPS CUT OFF.

RESULT OF LATEST ALLIED MOVES IN PACIFIC.

(*from The Daily Telegraph*).

It is estimated that about 100,000 Japanese troops have been cut off and virtually abandoned in the Bismarck-Solomon area by the latest Allied moves.

About 14,200 of these troops are in the Solomon Islands still remaining in Japanese occupation, while between 50,000 to 60,000 are in New Britain and New Ireland.

The latest moves by the United Nations in the South-West Pacific show that General MacArthur, Allied C.-in.-C in the South-West Pacific, and Admiral Nimitz, C.-in-C. of the United States Pacific Fleet, share the same strategy–to cut the communications of enemy concentrations and then to bypass them, knowing that they cannot be reinforced or supplied.

The occupation of the Green Islands isolated the Japanese garrisons in the Solomons from any assistance from New Ireland, New Britain or the main Japanese Bismarck base at Rabaul. The thrust of Admiral Nimitz to the Carolines and beyond, severed the line of communication to Rabaul from the north.

The occupation of the Admiralty Islands by General MacArthur's forces will virtually close the last line of supply and reinforcement for the Japanese garrisons in New Britain and New Ireland. This last line of supply has been by small vessels skirting the north coast of New Guinea. Many of these got through to New Britain because the United Nations advance in New Guinea has not yet reached Madang. The Allied landings on the Admiralty Islands, off the north coast of New Guinea, about 250 miles north-west of Madang, will as soon as they are consolidated make this coastal traffic prohibitively dangerous.

The seizure and consolidation of Manus and Los Negros—the two main islands in the Admiralty group—will serve two other purposes: They will form a valuable outpost to protect the western flank of the United Nations advance encircling Rabaul. They will be on the flank of any Japanese reinforcements and supplies sent against the advance of United Nations troops along the coast of New Guinea in the Madang and Wewak areas. Mopping up of 100,000 Japanese troops, virtually abandoned because of the reluctance of the Japanese fleet to accept action in the Carolines, is only a matter of time. In some islands there is more food suitable for Japanese consumption than in others, but already there have been reports of Japanese troops starving in New Guinea, where natural resources are greater than in many of the other islands. It is evident that the strategy of the United Nations in this theatre of war is to press on without delaying for mopping up operations, thereby giving the enemy no chance to recover from one blow before the next is inflicted. Both in the Asiatic and the South Pacific areas the policy is to hit hard. often.

DISPERSAL OF SIAMESE GOVERNMENT.

(*Far-East News Letter*).

On the evening of February 7, the Pibul Government in Siam officially announced the appointment of Colonel Chuang Chawengsak Songkhram, as Vice-Premier with station at Petchabun, as the first step towards the decentralization of the Government organs. It is understood that the Government intend to appoint other Vice-Premiers for the several regions to which the Government organs are to be decentralized. On February 15th it was announced that another Central Government organ had been established at a point in the Phanomdongrak Range, bordering on the Prachinburi and Pibul Songkram Provinces, with Police General Aduldej Charas as proxy-premier.

The creation of a new department in the Ministry of Defence, and the appointment of Prayura Pamoramontri as head of the department, as announced in the *Gazette* of February 8, makes one presume that he also will be appointed as another Vice-Premier. However that may be, it is now clearly known that Colonel Chuang (whose name can be translated literally as: 'Morale upholder') has happily gone to 'uphold morale' 300 kilometres away from Bangkok with his relatives, that is to say he has now given up the duty of looking after the welfare of the people of Bangkok and Dhonburi, in his former position as Minister of Public Health. He and his family have got away from the danger of air raids, according to the principles of Marshal Pibul's clique, leaving the people of Bangkok to carry on. Soon, we may hear where all these people have hidden themselves, including Marshal Pibul, who is trying to make himself a mystery man at the moment.

In regard to the decentralization programme of Government organs, the major advantage will fall on Marshal Pibul and his gang, while the people will be involved in more difficulties, inconveniences and insecurity. The most apparent drawbacks are non-contact between the people and the Government, and absence of the protection that the Government ought to give to the people. When Government organs are so scattered, it is certain that they cannot carry out their duties as effectively as before, especially when the country is under such war-torn conditions. At the moment, the people in Bangkok and Dhonburi find it difficult to get in touch with Government officials, because most of the officials have evacuated Bangkok. These difficulties will increase as time goes by. As regards measures of protection for the people, the members of the Municipal Government remaining in Bangkok can merely advise the people how to take shelter during raids, drink boiled water, and get out to the country side as soon as they can. These are only words and not actions. That is why most of the people are still unable to evacuate Bangkok.

Moreover, there is now an epidemic of small-pox raging in Dhonburi, while most of the Public Health officials who are responsible for preventing the spreading of diseases, have gone to Petchabun with their master, (the 'morale upholder'). The people of Bangkok and Dhonburi will have to meet more dangers from diseases, and the war. If the Government only took the same interest in the evacuation of the people as they did for the members of the Government, the outlook would be brighter, but so far the Government has done nothing of the kind. The policy of having no capital and decentralizing the Government organisation is, therefore, of no advantage to the majority of the people of Bangkok and Dhonburi, since they are left behind. On the other hand, the people in those provinces where the Government organs are now stationed, will now be liable to all the dangers of war, as the Government announced their intention to reorganise themselves for resistance, and said that they were not evacuating because they were beaten. Since the Government disperse themselves in order to gather their strength to help the Japanese to fight the Allies, it is but natural that the Allied Air Forces should attack them there.

It was announced by the Bangkok radio on February 18th that the members of the Government and the Commander-in-Chief had already evacuated "to the neighbourhood of a mountain where they can be reasonably safe". It was added that "they didn't do this for their personal safety or because they were afraid, but they have evacuated their homes for the benefit of the people of Thailand.

A CHINESE STALINGRAD.

The story of the defence of Changteh by the 57th Division of the Chinese Army is one of the most glorious and terrible episodes in the history of war.

On November 18, the Japanese began to attack, using 75 mm. guns, tear and sneezing gas, dive-bombers and machine-guns against Chinese rifles, grenades and machine-guns. Over 150,000 people—the entire civil population of the city, had been evacuated and the defending troops were entirely dependent on themselves. Food stores were destroyed by enemy bombardment, and ammunition in the second week was running low. It was in these dreadful hours that General Yu Cheng-wan re-enacted in real life the fiction of Beau Geste.

His only reinforcements were the straw-filled uniforms of dead comrades which were propped on ramparts during the night to be seen by the Japs next morning, and the bodies from a distance looked alive. To save bullets some century-old iron-tipped wooden spikes found in the city were issued to the troops on the walls, and with these they killed scores of Japs as they climbed up on their scaling ladders. Day after day, with 9,970 buildings out of the 10,000 behind them destroyed, they hurled the attackers headlong from the smoking battlements. Unable to reach the top, the Japs tied grenades loosely on long bamboo poles and hurled them as from catapults over the walls. When a Jap did succeed in putting a leg over he was already dead.

But there are limits to human endurance, even of the Chinese soldier whose valour in Changteh must rank with the defenders of Stalingrad. With the last 300, faced by certain death if they stayed, and bayoneting by the Japs, if they were wounded and unable to move, General Yu Cheng-wan decided to live to fight another day.

The once thriving city of Changteh to-day is only a heap of blackened rubble, reeking with the stench of unburied Japanese and Chinese corpses. Hardly a building is standing within the city's ancient walls, which themselves are crumbling from the effect of the Japanese artillery and mortar fire and the aerial bombardment, that blasted the Chinese 57th Division's positions dug into the ancient brick and stonework.

Now into free and desolate Changteh the population is slowly drifting back, salvaging what little they can to rebuild their homes.

INDIA'S FIFTH WAR BUDGET.

A sigh of relief, a sense of having reached shore and yet a realisation that though the worst was over there might yet lurk perils ahead, characterised the speech of the Finance Member when introducing the Budget of 1944—45. "In India the last eighteen months has been a period of economic storm", he said, and mentioned among its contributory factors heavy military expenditure, internal disturbances, natural calamities and the anti-social forces of profiteering and hoarding. In short, "the economic perils which

beset the country were as grave as the military threat, and if they have receded somewhat, the aftermath has been a measure of human suffering which will stand out even in the record of this devastating war." Conditions have improved considerably, and public support and public confidence have been restored to Government in its very drastic action against all those pernicious forces; and though there is still cause for anxiety and need for constant vigilance, yet it is imperative in this country, so susceptible to rumour and panic, to maintain a highly objective attitude that will counteract adverse psychological reactions caused by pessimistic reports and opinions.

ACCENT ON ECONOMIC STABILITY.

The budget is a war budget, but it is a budget which realises the important economic principle that a country cannot afford to spend on war and war alone. It has been the guiding principle of Britain's war finance to fix no ceiling to the ratio of war expenditure in real terms or in terms of money. In that country, the nature of social and economic organisation, and the successful working of a legion of economic controls have guaranteed a smooth and automatic rise in phenomenal strides in the grand total of resources available for defence purposes. Here, however, owing to many easily intelligible causes a position has now been reached, in which "a substantial increase in the demands on India's resources of skilled man-power or materials, even though the cost were not borne by Indian revenues, would impose a severe additional burden on her economy". This danger has been realised, and accordingly the country's war-time finance rests on the principle that India's economic stability, on which depends not only the well-being of her people but her utility as a base of operations, is maintained.

In the first place, the Government of India have decided that the fighting forces and their equipment chargeable to the Indian exchequer shall not exceed the requirements of India's own local defence purposes. Thus the setting up of the S. E. Asia Command will not affect India's liability for war expenditure. Further, the Financial Settlement regarding the allocation of war expenditure arrived at between Britain and India is to stand. It may here be recalled that out of the total expenditure incurred by India on defence and supply services during the 5 years upto 1943—44 the amount charged finally to Indian revenues is expected to be Rs. 800 crores, while a balance of Rs. 940 crores will be debited to H. M. G. in Britain. The share taken up by H. M. G. in implementing the recommendations of the Chatfield Committee is included in this figure of Rs. 940 crores.

IMPRESSIVE WAR EFFORT.

The foregoing should not, however, in any way detract from the vast contributions made by this country, and their results achieved in winning important victories. To quote the Finance Member:

> "This House is already aware and justifiably proud of the part played by India in the campaigns in N. Africa and Italy, and I need not dwell upon them here." "It will be sufficient to say that the trained soldiers, and the stream of munitions and war stores poured out by India, have been a most potent factor in the victories achieved in these theatres."

Rs. 262·64 crores, the total amount of defence expenditure, is an impressive figure, even taking into consideration the effect of a rise in prices, which accounts for an item of Rs. 13·01 crores. This total represents but the revenue part. A sum of

Rs. 38·30 crores forms an additional item, namely the capital part of the Defence expenditure, whose benefits to the country will be permanent. The following items will elucidate this: Airfields—Rs. 14·67 crores, Industrial expansion Rs. 6 crores, Air fields (under reciprocal aid)—Rs. 10.85 crores, new construction for the R. I. N. Rs. 2·58 crores and capital outlay on Tele-communications scheme Rs. 4·20 crores. Certain concrete measures taken to improve or expand the fighting forces call for mention. Since July 1, 1943, Indian troops have received better rations than formerly, and a larger amount of money has been spent on the well-being of the services than in any previous period. Secondly, the R. I. N. is growing in the size of its fleet. Meanwhile, the Indian Air Force is carrying out the Ten Squadron plan so far as pilot officers can be secured. The Balloon squadrons of the Air Forces in India are being Indianised, and an Indian Air Training Corps has been inaugurated.

Though it is not possible to determine precisely the financial benefits that India will receive as a result of lend-lease supplies from the U. S. A., as allocation of these between H. M. G. and Government of India has not been determined, the total value up to the end of 1944—45 is estimated at Rs. 350 crores. It may also be assumed "that India's share in their benefits will not be less than one-third." The estimated progressive total of the Reciprocal Aid to be afforded by India to the U. S. A. up to the end of 1944—45 is slightly more than Rs. 81 crores.

CIVIL EXPENDITURE.

The Civil expenditure for 1943—44, estimated at Rs. 76·78 crores, has increased to the figure of Rs. 84·29 crores. The following very significant items of additional expenditure explain the increase: (1) Grants to evacuees and families of British subjects detained in enemy territory—Rs. 2 crores, (2) Grants to Provinces and States in furtherance of the Grow More Food Campaign—Rs. 2 crores, and (3) Central assistance to Bengal for famine relief—Rs. 3 crores. A welcome item among the provisions of the coming year's Budget is the grant of Rs. 10 lakhs for industrial research. With it goes also a promise that after the war provision will be made for a grant of Re. 1 crore spread over 3 or 4 years to put into effect a scheme of co-ordinated research, plans for which are at present being drawn up by the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research Government's interest in the development of Indian industry has thereby been given very practical expression.

FIGHT AGAINST INFLATION.

The greatest difficulty facing both Government and the people during the past year has been monetary inflation induced by price inflation. Sound wartime finance should consist in the re-absorption of purchasing power adequate to the total Government outlay. This is not merely for the sake of mopping up the people's money to meet war expenditure, but essentially and in India solely, to prevent inflation and all its too evident evils. Hence strict anti-inflationary measures were indicated in the circumstances, and they were taken by the introduction of the principle of statutory price control and by the enacting of an Anti-Hoarding and Anti-Profiteering Ordinance. These measures were welcomed by public opinion in India. The Government also resorted to counteracting inflation through the positive method of enabling more consumers' goods and gold to be purchased by the public.

But the most important measure taken in this direction is the campaign of 'Save and Lend' led by Government. The response of the public to this has been most heartening of late, as during the period from January 31, 1943 to February 1, 1944, the subscriptions to the Defence Loans have amounted to Rs. 115 crores, a sum nearly thrice as much as was collected in the previous year. The Small Savings Campaign is about to be launched with a wider organisation. Here it may be noted that even in Britain, where the burden of war expenditure falls far more greatly on taxation than in India, the 'Save and Lend' principle, particularly the Small Savings Campaign, yields a considerable proportion of the ways and means of the British exchequer, and acts as a final deterrent to inflation. No wonder, therefore, the Finance Member stressed so greatly the importance of more and more borrowing for the economic health of the country.

NEW TAXATION PROPOSALS

New excise duties on tea, coffee and betel nut at the rate of two annas a pound, an increase in the excise duty of tobacco in order to yield an additional revenue of Rs. 10 crores, and a raising of the surcharge on the customs duties on spirits and tobacco from 20 per cent to 50 per cent form the new indirect taxes. Increased surcharges on taxes on annual incomes above Rs. 15,000, increase by 1/2 an anna in the Super tax on incomes between Rs. 35,000 and Rs. 2 lakhs, and a raising of the Corporation tax from 1 anna to 3 annas with a rebate of 1 anna under certain conditions, may be described as additional levies under income tax, whose most popular feature, however lies in raising the minimum of taxable income from Rs. 1,500 to Rs. 2,000.

The Budget has been called a bold one, and it does contain bold proposals. The "Pay As You Earn" scheme, which contemplates a measure of compulsory deposit, provides for an income tax payer to pay in advance quarterly income tax, which is to carry interest of 2 per cent. Another innovation to be put into effect by the Provinces was contained in the suggestion of an Estate Duty on non-agricultural property. Its object is two-fold. Acute property differences that have arisen during the war can be mitigated only by such a measure, which will also "fill a gap in the fiscal armoury of India" and aid post-war reconstruction.

FINANCIAL FOUNDATIONS FOR THE FUTURE.

Concrete and practicable plans of post-war reconstruction are under preparation by Government, in view of which the Finance Member placed the highest emphasis on the sound financial position of the Central and Provincial Governments. That depended, said the Finance Member, on the fullest development of their respective taxation resources. He made a modest estimate that in the first quinquennium after the war both borrowing and taxation would place in the hands of Government nearly Rs. 1,000 crores for the purpose of reconstruction; and sums for further five year periods might increase in a sort of geometric progression. Here it is necessary to note in particular two other significant items in the Budget speech. In the first place a Dollar Fund will be steadily built up to facilitate post-war trade between the U. S. A. and India, and secondly the Government of India will formulate their views regarding international monetary problems facing the post-war world after they have been discussed in the Indian Legislature. These proposals have brought the policy of the Government of India into line with expressed wishes of the Indian public.

Members of the public are requested to make a free present of any suitable old Tamil books they can spare for the perusal, in their leisure time, of our soldiers outside India.

Books so given will be handed over to the Superintendent of the State Press, who will arrange to despatch them.

PUDUKKOTTAI STATE NATIONAL WAR FRONT BUREAU.

PROGRAMME.

LECTURE CXC. (*Batch 6*).

25- 3-44	Municipal Office ...	6.00 p.m.		29- 3-44	Annavasal ...	7.00 p.m.
26- 3-44	Kilanilai-Puduppatti..	7.00 "		"	Ariyur ...	7.30 "
"	Kilanilai ...	7.30 "		30- 3-44	Malampatti ...	7.00 "
27- 3-44	Perumanadu ...	7.00 "		"	Perambur ...	7.30 "
"	Pulvayal ...	7.30 "		31- 3-44	Malaikkudippatti ...	7.00 "
28- 3-44	Sadayampatti ...	7.00 "		"	Tulaiyanur ...	7.30 "
"	Oliyamangalam ...	7.30 "				

LECTURE CXCI. (*Batch 1*).

1- 4-44	Municipal Office ...	6.00 p.m.		5- 4-44	Pungudi ...	7.00 p.m.
2- 4-44	Kiranur ...	7.00 "		"	Satyamangalam.. ...	7.30 "
"	Nanjur ...	7.30 "		6- 4-44	Mirattunilai ...	7.00 "
3- 4-44	Puvarasakudi ...	7.00 "		"	Arimalam ...	7.30 "
"	Venkatakulam ...	7.30 "		7- 4-44	Udayalippatti ...	7.00 "
4- 4-44	Perungalur ...	7.00 "		"	Killukottai ...	7.30 "
	Adanakkottai ...	7.30 "				

RECRUITING—ADVERTISEMENT—4 p. m.

25— 3—44	Ponnamaravathi.	1— 4—44	Vettamviduthi.
26— 3—44	Kodumbalur.		
28— 3—44	Vadakadu.	2— 4—44	Virachchilai.
30— 3—44	Alangudi.		
31— 3—44	Pudukkottai.	4— 4—44	Perambur.

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